

Kithead News

Newsletter of The Kithead Trust



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- The Townsin archive
- Helping with congestion

Kithead Catalogue goes online

We are conscious of the need to get a searchable catalogue online, so that our many potential users can see for themselves the incredible depth and breadth of detailed information we hold on operators large and small.

Our new website is still under construction - any delay is our fault entirely - and we don't want to rush this as we recognize that it will be our "shop window" for what we do and how we do it.

We have therefore developed an intermediate solution, with a stand-alone page to house the catalogue, with a link from our current website.

Go to: www.kitheadtrustdatabase.org.uk now!

Some of the listings are very detailed - these are down to "item" level - and here we have listed out every file we have for that entity.

Other listings are more general - at "series" level - where the list is a group of files. Our aim is to convert the series listings to item listings as soon as possible.

This would have been simpler had we waited until everything was done, but that would have delayed things by at least a couple of years; on balance, we felt it was best to get something "out there".

As it stands, the catalogue is incomplete but it is a testament to the fantastic effort put in by our volunteer team in the last 18 months.

There is more detail on how to use the catalogue on page 2.

Searching the Catalogue

Show entries

Search:

ACC NO	TITLE	CREATOR	DATE A	DATE B	EXTENT	LEVEL				
000075	Darlington Triumph Services Ltd.	Durham District Services Ltd.	1949	1950	1 file	item				
000076	Fawn Lea Omnibus Co. Ltd.	Durham District Services Ltd.	1949	1950	1 file	item				
000077	Darlington Triumph Services Ltd.	Durham District Services Ltd.	1951	1951	1 file	item				
000078	Darlington Triumph Services Ltd.	Durham District Services Ltd.	1948	1951	1 file	item				
000079	J Aaron & Sons, Ferryhill. Report for BTC	Durham District Services Ltd.	1949	1950	1 file	item				
000080	J Aaron & Sons, Ferryhill. Trading as the ABC Services	Durham District Services Ltd.	1949	1950	1 file	item				
000081	R & E Binks. Report for BTC	Durham District Services Ltd.	1949	1951	1 file	item				
000082	Gilesgate garage photos	Durham District Services Ltd.	unknown	unknown	1 file	item				
000984	Durham Bus Station	Northern General Transport Company	1966	1966	1 folder	item				
000487	Durham County line drawings	United Automobile Services	1993	1993	1 file	item				

Showing 1 to 10 of 12 entries (filtered from 8,280 total entries)

[< Previous](#) [Next >](#)

The search facility is pretty intuitive, although you may need to approach it in a number of ways to get all the results you are looking for.

Simply type your key words into the search box and there will be an instant return of the items or series we have on that subject.

We have tried to include in the listings all possible references so that users can easily and quickly get to what they need. However, it makes sense to search separately for your subject by its official name, any trading name, or any

initials. For example, for Midland Red, try searching for “Midland Red”, “BMMO” and “Birmingham and Midland”. By approaching the catalogue in several ways, you will get the most from it.

Note that the search enables you to display 10, 25, 50 or 100 results in one page.

The catalogue isn’t complete: we have concentrated on items from bus and coach operators for which we have a reasonable amount of material. So far, there is nothing from manufacturers or from the collections of individuals.

The work of our team of volunteers continues all the time, and at approximately monthly intervals we will upload the latest version of the catalogue. Note how the current number of entries (8,280) grows over time!

We will also put on the webpage details of things which have changed since the previous version.

Please use the search facility and feed back to us any glitches, problems or even praise at the usual address:

hello@kitheadtrust.org.uk

The Eatwell Connection

From Carlyle Works to Bluebell Railway

Seeing the photograph in the last edition of Kithead News of the Midland Red Choir and Orchestra prompted a vivid memory for Alan Eatwell.

“The Company used to provide free concerts to accompany film shows in village halls, working mens’ clubs and the like, with the objective of selling seats on its coach tours. The performers were all



drawn from among the employees and the lead violinist was one Joe Green, whose day-job was chargehand coppersmith in the Chassis Shop at Carlyle.

“He was an inveterate snuff taker and when he sensed a sneeze approaching, he would take a piece of rag from the box on his section, blow his nose and then put it back in the box! It paid to be cautious when working on his section (as I did) and being in need of something upon which to wipe one’s hands.”

Alan himself started his 40+ year career in the industry with BMMO at Carlyle Works, as an apprentice.

He progressed through the ranks at Midland Red and then at Southdown, before becoming Engineering Director with the newly-reformed Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach and being part of the management team which bought the company during privatization.

Following the sale of the Brighton company to The Go-Ahead Group in 1993, Alan stayed on, becoming Group Engineering Director and then Managing Director of the highly successful and expanding Metrobus subsidiary.

Buses are in Alan’s blood as his father, George, was Chief Inspector for BMMO; we were delighted to be able to hunt out



this photograph of George Eatwell, which the family hadn’t seen before. (Thanks again go to Roger Torode for scanning the BMMO collection for us).



To the manner born? Alan prepares to authorize the departure of another train on the Bluebell Railway.

In “retirement”, Alan serves as a volunteer with the Bluebell Railway, assisting with governance and platform duties. And if he isn’t involved with all things mechanical, we will be VERY surprised.

Not bad for a chap who professed to be neither a bus or rail enthusiast in his younger days!

Alan Townsin 1926-2016



Alan had a VIP visit of the Oxford Bus Museum at Long Hanborough in 2004, when one of the highlights was to inspect an early AEC Regent – one of his all-time favourite buses. (Nick Taylor)

Alan Townsin, a man described as being “one of the most prolific, knowledgeable and widely respected British bus writers of the 20th century”, sadly died in April this year, aged 90.

The Kithead Trust is honoured to have been chosen by the Townsin family to be the repository of Alan’s personal archive of bus-related material.

Alfred Alan (A.A.) Townsin’s interest in buses began in his native Newcastle, where he and fellow Grammar School pupil Bob Davis (later to be prolific bus photographer R C Davis) would regularly check the new deliveries to the Newcastle Corporation fleet.

He began his engineering career at Vickers Armstrong before moving to AEC and then Thornycroft. He would retain a high regard for both throughout his life.

However, writing was clearly what Alan wanted to do and during a period as part-time editor of *Buses Illustrated* from 1959 to 1965, he became a full-time trade journalist with *Commercial Motor* then *Bus & Coach*.

A period in public relations with West Midlands PTE was followed by a similar role with the Confederation of Passenger Transport.

In the late 1970s, Alan went freelance. Although he had been the author of numerous books from the 1950s onwards, this marked the start of a truly remarkable era. From that time he was responsible for authoring and editing what can only be described as a vast number of bus-related books, mainly in association with the Transport Publishing Company.

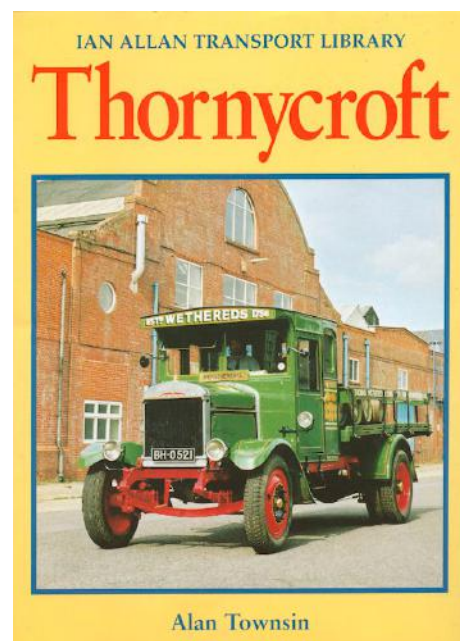
Series included *The British*

Bus Story, a tremendous multi-volume work, and *The Best of British Buses*, which focused on particular models.

In his latter years, his output understandably reduced, but he was still writing and replying positively to requests for information.

And he has left us one of the most extensive personal archives - on the opposite page you will see just a few of the pieces which we have found in our preliminary sift of the material.

Biographical information used here was largely derived with permission from the latest issue of Buses magazine, for which thanks are given.



The Townsin Collection

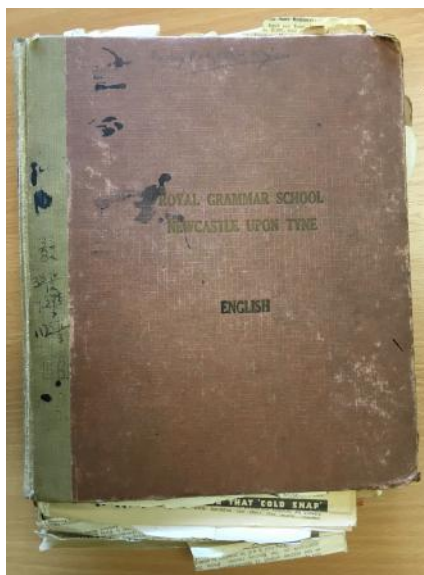
Alan Townsin was a highly significant figure within both the bus industry and the enthusiast movement. The collection of papers, photographs and books which has been donated to the Trust is therefore similarly significant.

It fills almost 140 Banker's Boxes - as his son Mark said "Dad never threw anything out" and it is to our great good fortune that so much of his work has survived.

It will take several months for Kithead volunteers to carefully work through the collection - establishing what is of lasting historical significance, transferring this to archive-standard boxes and cataloguing it. It can then be made available to the public.

Even a first "box listing" is taking some time, and in this and future issues we will share with you some of the significant material we find.

The first example is particularly charming - a 'loose leaf' binder embossed with the name 'Royal Grammar School, Newcastle Upon Tyne, English'. It is absolutely crammed full of press cuttings, starting in the 1930s, when Alan would have been in his early teens.



On the inside cover, there are the usual doodles - several spellings of 'reivers' for example - but also an artistic rendering of his own name in the style of the fleetname of his local operator Newcastle Transport. Dreams of operating his own company perhaps? There is certainly the style of the future draughtsman.



There is much material from Alan's years as editor of Buses Illustrated, with letters from contributors and the accompanying photographs - sometimes in very small format.

One is from a young chap named Gavin A. Booth of Edinburgh, who forwarded a photograph of Edinburgh Transport Department's Albion Aberdonian shortly before it set off for an exchange visit to Nice. Manager W M Little is on the left.

Gavin, of course, went on to be a prolific author in his own right, and worked on many projects with Alan Townsin in future years.



All of this came out of only the first few boxes. There is much more to come, including the official Park Royal photo archive and notebooks containing vehicle observations as far back as the 1930s.

We would like to thank the Townsin family for this significant donation, guaranteeing that Alan's work can be accessed and enjoyed.

Those Autobahns...

Following the piece on German *autobahns* in the last issue of the newsletter, we have had quite a bit of interest expressed.

Allan Millar, editor of *Buses* magazine wrote to say: *Re the Autobahn publication, if you were to access back issues of trade publications (as I was able to do over 30 years ago when I worked for Commercial Motor) you would find a lot of coverage during the 1930s of a German Roads Delegation. This UK study group visited and admired the construction of what it called Motor Roads across Germany and was pressing for their construction in the UK, as indeed they were from the 1950s onwards.*

As I recall, the British Roads Federation either sprang from or was involved in this pressure. It was still around in the 1980s (and probably longer than that) and was an alliance of road builders and users (the RHA and FTA certainly subscribed towards its aims and my guess is that CPT could have, too) that argued the case for more road construction. To that end, I'd argue that the autobahn book is very much part of the British motorway story. Rather like the Volkswagen, there is an unfortunately exceptionally dark political/totalitarian/murderous story that goes with it, but nonetheless the autobahn was the model for the Preston bypass, M1 and all that came after them.

Peter White, Emeritus Professor of Transport at the University of Westminster, draws attention to the recent publication of *From Rail to Road and Back Again*, edited by Ralf Roth of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt and Colin Divall of York University.

This contains a chapter by Reiner Ruppmann entitled *The City and the Autobahn 1926-56: How Frankfurt am Main promoted Road Traffic and Realised an Old Dream*. This includes some history behind the Autobahn propaganda.

Railway Corner

The majority of our archive is bus-related material, but we also cover other modes (including Autobahns, clearly). Volunteer Tony Jones looks after the railway archive, and particularly our vast railway library, and in each edition he will select something from the collection to highlight just what we offer.

We have information on the complete spectrum of railway activities from the beginnings in the 1820s to the present day. Much of the information is from the pre-grouping era, covering anything from board minutes and management documents, through to locomotive design and general railway engineering.

An example of the records which were once the typical administrative work of a railway is a request from the Board of Trade to the Great Eastern Railway requesting information in a letter dated 14th May, 1914.

“Will you please let me have particulars of the expenses your department has incurred in connection with the Wisbech tram for the twelve months ending 31st December 1913 as follows:

General Expenses and Maintenance:

1. Permanent Way
2. Building, Fixtures, Tools and Miscellaneous Equipments.

Please also state the length of line authorised and the length of line open for public use.”

The total expenses for Locomotive and Carriage Expenses for 12 months in 1913 amounted to £1,828 – 19s. – 10d. This covered depreciation, 8 full time drivers, 6 locomotives, 10 carriages. The carriages had amassed a mileage of 89,000.

How times have changed!

The Value of History

We have again been able to provide evidence for an important piece of work contributing to the current debate on transport.

David Begg is visiting professor of sustainable transport at Plymouth University, a former chairman of the Government's Commission for Integrated Transport, and one of transport's leading thinkers. Based in part on evidence we were able to supply, Professor Begg has produced a report entitled *The Impact of Congestion on Bus Passengers*.

The report concludes that bus speeds are declining at between 10% and 14% each decade, and in some urban areas average speeds are now below 10 mph. Prof. Begg concludes that, left unchecked, congestion will worsen as traffic is projected to increase by 55% by 2040.

"Traffic congestion is a disease which if left unchecked will destroy the bus sector. We have to change travel behaviour", said David.

The report is available for download at:
<http://www.greenerjourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Prof-David-Begg-The-Impact-of-Congestion-on-Bus-Passengers-Digital.pdf>

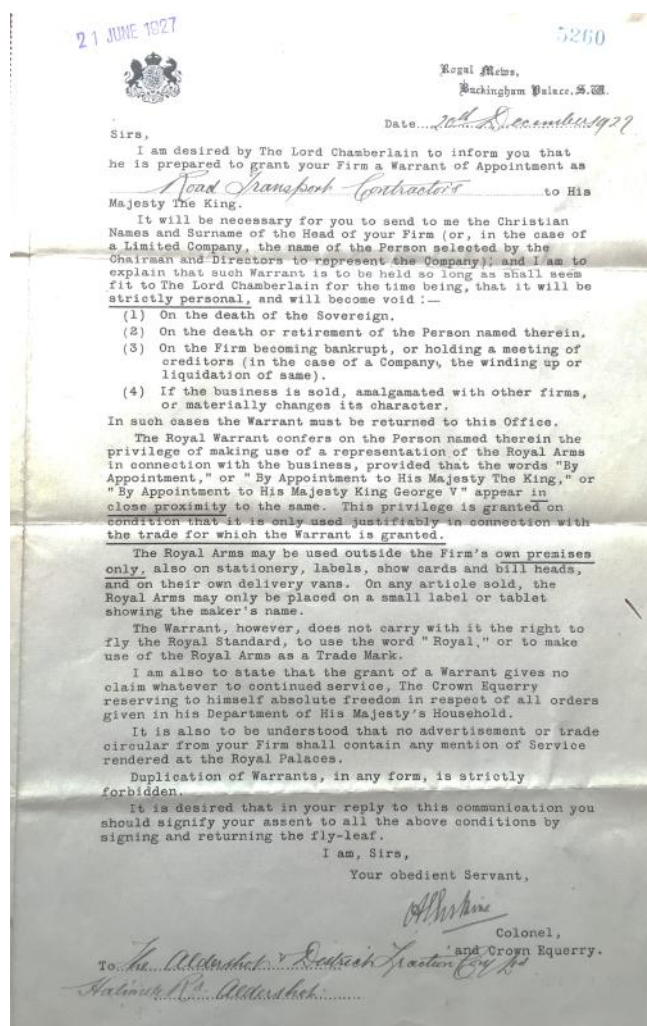
Update: readers will recall that last year The TAS Partnership gathered evidence from the Kithead collection on the performance of bus operations in the Passenger Transport Executives in the ten-year period leading up to deregulation in 1986.

The subsequent publication of *The PTEs 1975-85* informed the debate about regulation and control of bus services which has now taken a step forward with the publication of *The Bus Services Bill* by the Government. Go to:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-bill-overview>

And in Royal News...

Something rather strange happened at Kithead last month. We received an email from a very official-sounding chap enquiring if we had the registration records for "...a car which holds very significant 'memories' for a particularly well-know individual, who is celebrating her 90th Birthday this year." Sadly, we didn't have the records that were being sought.

On a completely different subject (just before we are whisked off to the Tower) we went scurrying into the collection and unearthed a Royal Warrant awarded to Aldershot & District in 1927. Does anyone have any idea what it was for?



Captain's Log

with Archivist Philip Kirk

There is a feeling at Droitwich that we have really gone up a gear. You will see from our front-page feature that for the first time we have a searchable catalogue available online. This marks a very significant step for the Trust, fulfilling a long-term aim; the catalogue will be expanded and developed on a monthly basis until it is complete.

We had hoped that this would be launched at the same time as a new website but there have been delays with that, and therefore we took the decision to get what we have out there. Please use it and let us know about your experience.

The donation of the Townsin collection is no less a step forward. Alan Townsin will be known to all our supporters, and his collection is as encyclopedic than the man himself. The examples quoted in this edition are just the tip of a very large iceberg and we will be sharing more with you as we carefully go through the material.

Late news is that we have received another substantial donation of material – the photo archive of a major bodybuilder. More next time...

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Request Corner

Attention Welsh readers!

Supporter Richard Morgan of the Omnibus Society is seeking photographs of Western Welsh 369 (CKG 458), a Daimler CWG5 with Brush UL55R body. It only operated from September 1943 to December 1951 when it was broken up.

The only photograph so far found is from the OS Archive taken by the late J F Parke at the Ely 'graveyard' minus its body in a very dilapidated state. If anyone can help, please make contact through our usual email.

If you have a particular item you have been searching for, we can publish your request in Request Corner. Just email us at the normal address.

Why not pay us a visit?

We are open Wednesdays and Thursdays each week from 10am to 4pm (and some other days and times by arrangement).

Please book your place in the Search Room by emailing hello@kitheadtrust.org.uk

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